

Gasbag

HANDS OFF IRELAND

SO THE two greatest "politicians" in the world, namely Lennon and McCartney, have spoken again and this time the subject is Ireland. Well let me tell Lennon and McCartney something; there are people in Ireland who want to remain British. I used to be a Beatle fan but after I heard McCartney's single "Give Ireland back to the Irish" I immediately got rid of everything associated with Paul McCartney. If McCartney and Lennon are so interested in Ireland why didn't the Beatles make frequent tours in the country? — RAYMOND COULTER, Strabane, Co. Tyrone.

OKAY, so it's the "New Look". Okay, so you've changed printers. But can't you be a little more consistent in your protection of "innocent minds"? In your first "new look" in an interview with Maggie Bell she said quote: "—until I saw a 50-year-old private and thought oh s---". Then in the Jerry Garcia interview there are three F***s. Yet six pages later Frank Zappa said quote: "It doesn't matter a shit to them....". On to page 23 and we're back to "f---" in the Marco Bolan interview and this week Marc says "I don't give a ****", and "...it's a load of ****". I presume we'll fill our own words since we're not even given a first letter clue! So what about being a little bit more consistent? What is in a word? A rose by any other name... Otherwise your paper is loads better! — CELIA WHITEHOUSE, Worcester.

*Editor: Agreed. It's certainly about time we ****ing made up*

I HAVE just read the article on "Wishbone Ash" (NME 19/2/72) and I'd like to thank you for it. It is about time someone realised that there are other groups than T. Rex in the music business. I have been a fan of Wishbone Ash since hearing their first album and no matter how much I listen to them, they still affect me as

they did over a year ago. I used to be a T. Rex fan but I got fed up of hearing the same thing over and over again. If "Telegram Sam" was the first thing that T. Rex had recorded, it would be fine, but it is just the same. So long live Wishbone Ash and here's to the new album in May. — TIM BAR-NARD, Chesterfield.



IN PRAISE OF WISHBONE

READERS LETTERS: New Musical Express, 128 Long Acre, London, WC2E 9QH

DECCA DOWNER

ANY new material, however old of the Rolling Stones must be applauded, but Decca's latest offering "Milestones" which contains twelve tracks all previously released — many in LP form — to me seems to exploit Stones fans. Surely Decca can find something new and unreleased of the Stones no matter how old it is. Surely more than twelve tracks should be on each album, after all there are as many as sixteen tracks of the Beatles "Golden Oldies" Parlophone album. Twelve already-released tracks at full album prices. Scandalous. — NAME AND ADDRESS WITHHELD.

BEAUTIFUL BOLAN

THOSE PEOPLE who say Bolan can't play don't know what they are talking about. I saw Tyrannosaurus Rex play twice. Bolan was brilliant. Maybe he has made commercial singles — well, isn't every single commercial? Anyway, some people enjoy those singles, which is the purpose of the

what every bloke is jealous of. Leave him alone, and if you don't like his music don't listen to it. — J. AFFERTON, Plymouth.

REID BETWEEN THE LINES

I BOUGHT Neil Reid's record and before an assembled company made a funeral pyre of it and danced around it (it's the only way we get our kicks). — P. WELSBY, Horsham.

BEGGARED

WHEN WILL someone please sit up and listen to Beggars Opera? They are Scotland's best hope for the future and our chance to prove that Scotland can produce good musicians. They have had little or no mention in the music papers and I feel it is time they did. They are original, which is more than can be said for some of the supposed 'up and com-

ing' bands. Will someone please go to hear them and I'd be delighted to see them get even a small mention in the NME. I'm sure there must be someone who agrees with me. — LIZ NICHOLL, Kilmemuir.

GHASTLY, SCRUFFY

WHAT HAVE you done to the NME? It's absolutely ghastly. Every page full of utter rubbish about those scruffy long-haired individualists who pass themselves off as men, as Singers — and of Groups. "Ugh". And decent-faced clean-living people like Englebert get ignored. ESTELLE CARFIELD, Fleetwood.

IN DEFENCE OF ELTON JOHN

I AM SICK to death of your snide criticism of Britain's most brilliant artist, Elton John. You may have noticed by now that your sarcastic and pointless review of the RFH concert is conspicuous by its degrading comparisons and insults. I suggest you listen to "All the Nasties" off his latest LP, take a good long look in a mirror and think what he's getting at. You won't print this letter because about the only bad thing in this world short of strong criticism is your mouldy music paper. — C. J. DARICE, Newport.

WONDERFUL WILLIAMS

SO FRANK Sinatra thinks Tony Bennett is the world's best singer does he? He's good, I'll give him that, but never the best. Andy Williams could never be kept down. He's got the widest range and puts more feeling into a lyric than Bennett could ever hope to do. When did Tony Bennett have his last chart entry, album or otherwise? Andy Williams has been the most consistent album "charter" for ages even since his show got 'axed'. No one can interpret lyrics like he does. Hear Bennett sing 'Ave Maria' or 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic' and make tears stream down faces like Williams does. Listen to that, Sinatra, and think again. As for you, anyone can stand in front of an orchestra and talk into a mike. So come on NME, let's have some articles about a really great singer for a change. — ELAINE BRANCH, Cheltenham.

BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED SIMON

TO PAUL SIMON: As one who has purchased all your works, seen your concerts and followed your career with an exuberance and dedication closely bordering on abnormality, it hurts me to write this letter, Paul, but if your latest LP "Paul Simon" really did take two years to put together, then I'm one customer you haven't kept satisfied. I know you're swimming in troubled water since Art's departure from the talented and seemingly inseparable partnership you had, but I don't think you can really expect us to accept such mediocrity and unmemorable work because of his absence. The phenomenal success of "Bridge over Troubled Water" has not been forgotten in your latest work, has it? I never thought I'd see the day when the pen of Paul Simon gave up the search for originality, new subjects and new depth. I'm on your side, Paul, but when times get rough and evening falls so hard, follow Dylan and lay low for a few years. Remember when a man gets tied up to the ground, he gives the work his saddest sound. Please don't become another destroyed genius. — COLIN BRINTON, Harwich. LP WINNER

From the album